

**Michigan House of Representatives  
Commerce & Trade Committee  
Hearing on House Bill 4052  
May 19, 2015**

**Testimony Submitted by:**



Mr. Chairman. Members of the Committee. Good Morning.

I'm Lee Gonzales, Legislative Liaison for the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and I am here today on behalf of our Department and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission to express our concern about House Bill 4052.

My statement will be brief out of respect to the many others who wish to address this Committee.

As currently drafted, House Bill 4052 is bad public policy. By eliminating local ordinances which provide protection from discrimination in the workplace, this bill takes Michigan backwards.

Allowing workplace discrimination hurts local communities efforts to attract the best and the brightest; it undermines economic development opportunities and it drives talented young people from our state.

In 2013, MDCR published a report that examined the economic impact of allowing this type of discrimination. That report made clear that the young talent, who we all know are the key to our long-term economic vitality, do not want to work and live in unwelcoming communities.

That's why the Civil Rights Commission reiterated its long-held support for discrimination protection last year.

That's why the Commission developed a model local ordinance to help communities create these very protections in the absence of state action to expand the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act.

And that is why we must oppose HB4052 without strong, clarifying language which eliminates any erosion of anti-discrimination protections.

If, as supporters of this bill argue, the problem is piecemeal protections that vary from community to community ... the solution is not to strip discrimination protection from the few who have it. The solution is to provide those same legal protections to all people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

